

# RESIDENT

IMBIBE | Julie Rose

## SWEET HOSPITALITY GROUP *30 Years of Dramatic Catering*

**H**amilton creator Lin-Manuel Miranda, Neil Patrick Harris and husband David Burtka, have all dined on Sweet Hospitality Group's fare this season. In addition to private parties and benefits, they cater pre-curtain parties and run the innovative lobby concession stands we all hit up at intermission.

### LINCOLN CENTER

A tenet of starting a successful business is to find a niche and fill it, and that's exactly what founder and owner Julie Rose did, thirty years ago. She came to New York to study musical theater writing, and after graduating, was working at a kitchen in Queens that catered film and television shoots. She wasn't so great at working on large-scale food prep. "They kind of kicked me out of the kitchen, and said, 'Why don't you take the food to the jobs?'" Rose says. She became known among the film crews, and eventually she got a call from Lincoln Center's Mitzi Newhouse Theater, which needed someone to run their concessions.

"I asked the people I was working for if they wanted to do it, and they said no, and I didn't think about it again until I picked up *The New Yorker*, and saw that David Mamet was doing a play there, and he had just won for *Glengarry Glen Ross*, so I thought, what the hell, I'll call."

### LION KING

Rose had a success on her hands. "I was a resentful business owner," she laughed. "I wanted to be in the arts, but I was around the arts, so it was really fun." And the business just grew organically. The Beaumont

Theater opened a much bigger venue holding 1,000, so she started hiring people. She read that Disney would be opening a theater, and contacted them.

"I was always a marketer," Rose says. "I'm an

extrovert, and I like selling, so it just naturally happened." Today, her company is in 26 theaters, and still growing. They added City Center last year. For Disney, they designed a *Lion King* souvenir cup that is a best seller. "People love it and they are collecting them" Rose says.



### CABARET

Sweet Hospitality also caters weddings, bar mitzvahs, corporate events, and all kinds of parties, and Rose keeps up on food trends. Today, people want healthier options. Some of the theater concessions have more extensive menus than others. One, on Theatre Row, serves empanadas, and the Beaumont offers hummus and cheese plates.

The company had a full dinner menu with waiter service at the recent production of *Cabaret*, starring Alan Cumming, because it was set up as an actual nightclub in Weimar Berlin. The atmospheric environment there spurred Rose into doing more immersive events at private parties.

### HARLEM SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

An upcoming party for Harlem School of the Arts, on whose board she sits, will have a Havana theme, with her staff dressed in Cuban costumes and hats. "Our tagline is 'A dramatic departure from ordinary.' It is who we are. Most of us came from a theater or arts background. So for us it's the fun of putting on a show." ♦

[sweethospitalitygroup.com](http://sweethospitalitygroup.com)